



By: TA | AP Brief

Australia boosts military spending



The **Iran war** had greatly complicated the global strategic landscape, Defense Minister Richard Marles said Thursday as he announced a major increase in Australian military spending.

Marles released the latest two-year update of Australia's defense strategy and said an additional 53 billion Australian dollars (\$38 billion) in spending on defense was planned over the next decade.

Australia's defense budget would grow from 2.8% of GDP this year to 3% by 2033 as "Australia faces its most complex and threatening strategic circumstances since the end of World War II," Marles said.

Asked how much more complex and threatening Australia's circumstances were since the United States and Israel attacked Iran in February, Marles told reporters: "I don't think anyone could honestly answer that question."

"It greatly complicates the global strategic landscape," Marles said. "The world feels less safe."

"Having said that, we do very much support the strategic objective of denying Iran a deployable nuclear weapon," Marles added.

The latest strategy expands the military's adoption of autonomous and uncrewed systems on land, sea and air, including the Australian-developed Ghost Bat uncrewed jet aircraft and Ghost Shark underwater drone.

The strategy also expands the military's long-range strike capabilities and accelerates the introduction of integrated air and missile defense systems.

Australian self-reliance

Marles said his government's decision to increase defense spending to 3% of GDP was not a response to pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

The Pentagon released its own **National Defense Strategy** in January that chastised U.S. allies to take control of their own security.

The Australian government was making its own resourcing decisions, Marles said.

The latest spending strategy would focus on Australian self-reliance, which should not be confused with military self-sufficiency

"What that has yielded to date is, under our government, the biggest peacetime increase in defense spending that our nation has seen," Marles said.

The latest spending strategy would focus on Australian self-reliance, which should not be confused with military self-sufficiency, Marles said.

"This is not about jettisoning alliance relationships. To the contrary, alliances, especially with the United States, will always be fundamental to Australia's defense," Marles said.

Australia's largest-ever defense investment is expected to be a fleet of at least eight submarines powered by U.S. nuclear technology provided through the **AUKUS** partnership with the United States and Britain.

Australia expects the subs would cost between AU\$268 billion (\$193 billion) and AU\$368 billion (\$264 billion) over three decades.